

IN BRIEF

Bird material needed

Merseyside County Museums are providing help to archaeologists in the northwest of the U.K. by identifying and analysing bird remains from excavations. Consequently we need to extend our osteological research collections and would be very grateful to receive British bird carcasses – especially passerines – such as those normally discarded after research projects.

If you know of such material, please contact us at Liverpool (051) 207 0001 (extension 16) or post the specimens (well sealed in polythene) to the address below. We will gladly refund postage.

8 October 1980

Miss Clem Fisher

Dept. Vertebrate Zoology, Merseyside County Museums,
William Brown Street, Liverpool L3 8EN.

A new record of the Sooty Swiftlet *Collocalia vanikorensis*
from New Ireland

Among a collection of birds collected by Bruce Beehler on New Ireland in the Bismarck Archipelago, I find a specimen of *Collocalia vanikorensis* which has not previously been recorded from that locality.

Although Mayr (1937, *Amer. Mus. Novit.* No. 915) examined skins from both New Britain and New Hanover Islands, he was unable to determine their racial affinities because of the unsuitability of his material (specimens were either immature or in moult). However, he does give wing measurements for these birds as varying from 117 to 126 mm. Our specimen from the island of New Ireland, which lies between New Britain and New Hanover, has a wing measurement of 111 mm. The bird appears to be in fresh plumage, but the pale tips to the secondaries indicate that it may not be fully adult. Other measurements are: tail, 49; tail furcation 6 mm; weight 8.9 gm. The bird was obtained in a forest 10 km NNW of Cape Narum at an altitude of 720 m on 16 February 1976. The sex is unrecorded.

28 October 1980

S. Dillon Ripley

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560, U.S.A.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Scientific American, Readings from. 1980. Introductions by Barry W. Wilson. Pp. 1-276. Many drawings and diagrams, some in colour. Freeman: Oxford and San Francisco. Board £10.60. Paper £4.90.

Surprisingly, these 25 papers, reprinted here verbatim, form over half the total number of articles about birds published in *Scientific American* 1948-1979. All of them were important reviews or studies when first published and nearly all the subject matter has been overtaken by more recent research; nevertheless every one repays careful re-reading, even if written 25 years ago. The subjects are divided between flight, migration and navigation, evolution, behaviour, physiology and song, and birds and people. The paperback review copy is excellently produced and the price exceptional.

617